



## New Beginnings



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### Chapter 1 by Fanwizard

“Laughter is not at all a bad beginning for a friendship, and it is far the best ending for one.”

-Oscar Wilde

Since I was small, Mom told me about beginnings. How when a beginning ended, 2 new ones would appear. I would choose which beginning I wanted to follow. Sometimes you couldn't choose, and fate chose instead.

I didn't always want to choose my new beginning. Some were dangerous, or sad. Others were painful, or disappointing. Sometimes, I even wanted to avoid both of the beginnings. However, you have to continue on the path of life.

But you can never cheat fate. Fate always wins in the end, no matter how long you fight it. There is no use to fight your destiny.

I know I have to introduce myself, or it's rude. My name is Sophie Lauren Brooks. My last name used to be Taylor, but Father and Mom wanted a divorce. So, I wanted to change my name back to Brooks. Mom didn't protest.

The Great Depression ended exactly 8 years ago, in 1945. Then, the United States of America went into another war, with Germany.

I know Mom doesn't want me to know, but I know that my uncle Robert died in 1945. I barely knew him, but I have a few faint memories of him. I remember him being a young man whose name was Evelyn, and Edward. I remember him being a young man whose name was Evelyn, and Edward. I remember him being a young man whose name was Evelyn, and Edward.

Now at 16, I've been trying to figure out who I am. It's difficult. When you have years of memories building on, I can't grasp what I want to do.

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Aunt Carol married, and already had 3 children, 1 pair of twins, and an older daughter named Madison.

The best way for me to remember things is to stare at an old photograph of Uncle Robert or Grandfather William, the one that died over 15 years ago, when I was only 1.

Still, I don't remember much, except seeing Caroline and Grandma covered in ash, me wanting to play with dolls, and packing my belongings. Then, I remember things I want to forget, the Great Depression, seeing a man commit suicide, and feeling hungry. I wish I never saw those things. I was young.

But I remembered them anyways, wishing I could forget them all.

## Chapter 2 by Bekah



I'm still struggling with the most recent beginning in my life, the most difficult. My mom has an illness. She won't tell me what, only that she will only be here for a few more months. I think it's some type of cancer. I want all these issues to go away, but they won't. They can't. I have always been hopeful of what the future brings, but right now I don't see how the future can look so bright.

It was one day when I was reflecting on what I was going to do about all this when I heard a knock on the door. I got up out of my chair and went to the front door. When I cracked the door open enough to see outside, I saw a scraggly looking man, in his 50s. He had dirty and torn clothing and what looked like a nasty wound on his arm. The man was also severely exhausted. As if he had been running away from someone. In the current heatwave, that would tire anyone out. He breathed heavily for a few seconds while I looked on in awe. By the time he had recovered his breath, I had regained my wits.

"Are you alright, sir?" I asked. The man looked down at his arm then back up at me and gave me a face as if to say, "Do I look okay?"

However what he said aloud was, "No, not really. Can I come in for a drink of water? It's burning up out here."

"Umm..." I thought for a moment. This could be a bad idea. I didn't know this man, and he could do anything to me. Plus, whoever was chasing him probably wasn't very nice judging by the gash

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"Here sit in this chair. I'll get some water from the faucet." I went over to the sink and started filling a cup with water. I took it back to him and he downed it all in just a few seconds.

"Thanks so much, girl," he said in a gravelly voice. I could tell he was thankful; he looked like he hadn't drunken anything in days.

"You're welcome." There was an uncomfortable silence for a few seconds. "Sir, what's your name?"

The man looked me over for a second and then answered, "Thomas Cadenson. What's yours?"

"Sophie. Sophie Brooks. Can I take a look at your wound for you, Mr. Cadenson?" I questioned.

"Oh, sure, Miss Sophie."

As I went over to fill a bowl with hot water, I knew somehow that this was more than a random stranger. His name, his face, he looked familiar somehow. Almost like I had seen him in a dream. I turned back around to clean up his arm and was shocked into silence for a moment. I knew who he was. In that moment, I realized exactly who I was looking at.

And I knew two things without a shadow of a doubt. First, I never thought it would be possible for me to see this man again. And second, I really wished he had stayed dead.

### Chapter 3 by Fanwizard



"Grandfather?" my voice is hoarse, like I'd been screaming. I can't remember if I have. Or if I haven't. "Who are you?"

"I told you," his voice is gruff. "I'm Thomas Cadenson. I'm perfectly alive, little missy."

"Prove it," my hands and voice both shook badly as I attempted to sound calm, confident.

Thomas seemed at a loss for words. "Er, how do you want me to prove it you?"

"Give me your wrist."

He obliged, letting me take his wrist without protest.

I pressed my thumb against his wrist, searching for a heartbeat. His hand was cold, dry, with no heartbeat to speak of.

"Sir, do you have a knife?"

Thomas used his other hand to reach into his pocket and give me a rusty knife. It wasn't the sharpest or cleanest thing, but it would have to do.

I used the tip to make a cut into his arm. He winced, but remained silent. Normally, a cut like this would leave a man screaming. Or at least a tiniest bit of blood. Even a drop of red blood would have been helpful. There was nothing.

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I forced myself not to scream. I cut a bit of fabric from his raggedy clothes off to treat the cut, wrapping it around tightly and applying pressure.

"Thomas, tell me the truth or I swear to God that I will scream for help," my voice still shook.

"Thomas is my real name," he said weakly. "It's always been my real name."

"Then what's your full name?" I sounded calmer than I really felt, and felt proud of this fact.

"Thomas William Cadenson," Thomas said meekly.

Grandfather William. The one who had died when I was one. Mom had always said that Thomas was William's father's name, and William never liked being called Thomas, choosing to be called William instead.

"Are you human?"

"Miss Sophie, of course I'm huma-"

"Then why don't you have a heartbeat or any blood when I cut you with your knife?" I demanded. Instead of feeling scared, I was rather annoyed with this guy.

"I was human at one point in my life," William corrected himself.

"Then what are you now? Why are you here? How did you get the wound in your arm?"

"I'm not dead. But I'm not living," William explained. "I'm in between, and I can't escape from the in between."

"Then why are you here?"

William fixed me with emerald green eyes, identical to Mom's. Identical to mine. "Because I require your help."

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